

TRAINING WORKSHOP:

TOWARDS EMPOWERING FISHERIES OFFICERS TO MANAGE THE FISH STOCKS, BIODIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENT OF KYOGA BASIN LAKES.

12th – 16th June 2001 FIRRI, Jinja, Uganda,

ISSUES AFFECTING FISHERIES, BIODIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENT OF KYOGA BASIN LAKES AS REPORTED BY FISHERIES OFFICERS

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1. Decline in fish stocks and fish species diversity due to excessive fishing effort.
2. Use of destructive fishing gears and methods e.g seines, cast nets, of recent mono-filament nets, tycoonning, etc.
3. Capture of immature fish.
4. Invasion by water hyacinth and floating sudd
5. Ineffective management of fisheries due to limited (reluctance) community participation in lake management affairs.
6. Of recent, illegal buying and selling of fish in the lake without landing deprives the department of statistics and also puts the owner of fishing vessels at risk.
7. Lack of coordination among fisheries departments of districts of Kyoga basin (i.e. differences in policies from districts to district – laxity in law enforcement).
8. Inadequate investment skills among fishers
9. Political interference – creation of illegal landings
10. Ill-facilitated field staff makes monitoring difficult and kills morale
11. Pollution and degradation of the fish habitat from construction works and agro-chemicals.
12. Poor infrastructure
13. Lack of control of licensing by fisheries staff
14. The rising water levels in the lake cause serious impacts to the fishing expeditions by way of destruction of the fishing gears and sudden blockages of landing site entries.
15. Some areas at the shoreline show high degree of sedimentation. These areas being breeding areas for fish are seriously interfered.
16. Water hyacinth is still highly patched in some fishing grounds.
17. With the rainy seasons, the winds are so strong at the lake prompting the sudd to move. This also undoubtedly interferes with fish breeding.
18. At the residential landing sites the need for fuel wood for purposes of curing fish and cooking has rooted out trees with subsequent environmental impacts both terrestrial and aquatic. For example, soil erosion becomes an inevitable situation

19. The handling of fish from the time of landing of the catch to the time of sale in the landing sites and in the markets a far off is not safe enough.
20. The operation of illegal landings with associated use of illegal gears is another major issue in the fisheries sector. This problem is associated with poor catches and a threat to the biodiversity in the lake. The use of seine nets, mono-filament nets, tycoonning and other uncompliant applications of other methods are all at war with the productivity and biodiversity of the lake.
21. LCs lack functional concern in the management of the fisheries resources by way of reinforcing the concern of the fisheries staff in the management process.
22. Lack of registered NGOs and CBOs in the fisheries sector is yet another setback. There are few associations of fishermen and none for the fish mongers.
23. The staff are also limited in applying their efforts in the lake since there is lack of outboard engine boats in the department to help in operations, malpractices therefore persist.
24. Poor road network to the landing sites making it difficult to man fisheries activities as expected.
25. Very limited funds for fisheries activities making operations hard and non-uniform.
26. Migratory nature of fishermen and hiding away leading to poor catch assessment statistics collection.
27. Less interest of boat owners and fishermen to register and license their boats giving a limited focus on fishing pressure in the lake and poor revenue collection.
28. Lack of openness in the fishing community to expose wrong doers among themselves always covering culprits.
29. Lack of protective wear/gear for operations.
30. Lack of co-management of fisheries resources
31. Most of the landing sites settings are not planned and this is showed by the proximity of structures e.g huts to water shore line. This makes cleaning of the landing poor. And there is lack of rubbish/refuse disposal areas and in a proper way.
32. There is pollution of lake water by rubbish, feaces (due to lack of latrines) and their use at landing sites.
33. Loose soil from upland resulting from agricultural activities silt up the lake basin.
34. Lakes have been invaded by various water weeds namely; *Ceratophyllum submersum*, *C. dermersum*, *Utricularia reflexa*, *U. diflexa*, *Najas horida*(1), *Najas* (2), *Nymphaea ceralia*, *N. lotus*, *Potamogeton richardi*, *Utricularia gibba*, *Seraba*, *Potamogeton schwenfurthi*, *Polygonium salicifolia*.
35. High post harvest losses due to poor storage.
36. Conversion of macrophytes into other agricultural uses.
37. Lack of facilitation for training of fishermen and fisheries dependent communities

38. Tenderers of landing sites levy heavy charges on fishermen and fishmongers causing fishermen to migrate to other un-tendered landing sites.
39. Open access to the lake has caused too much manpower to be at the lake. The total catch landed looks big but the catch per unit effort is small and this has resulted into poverty among the fishing communities. Because fishermen have remained poor, they have no funds to acquire enough fishing inputs and yet there are no credit facilities in place to assist them.
40. Information on the fisheries resources is not enough because extension servants are ill-equipped. They lack weighing shades and off loading slabs only to mention but a few.
41. Fish landings have continued to have poor hygienic conditions. Such poor hygienic conditions have threatened to pollute the lake.
42. Fishermen have developed a habit of tying heavy objects to the suddes to make them stationery. Such objects include heavy stones and these objects break off and fall in the lakebed. There is fear that in the long run these objects may change the nature of the bed.
43. Concern has also been raised about the ferry at Masindi port. The oil products being poured in the lake might have serious consequences on the natural flora and fauna of the lake.

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

- a) Introduction and enforcement of closed seasons.
- b) Uniformity of policies in all neighbouring districts (law enforcement).
- c) Proper facilitation and remuneration of field staff (i.e. transport allowance).
- d) Acquisition of more outboard engine boats for frequent lake patrols.
- e) Removal of floating suddes.
- f) Massive education of the communities on their role in the management of the lake.
- g) Halting the buying of fish in the lake.